

# Washington State Operation Storefront Surveyor Training Tip Sheet

## 1. Training Your Surveyors

A. Proper training is the most important component in efficient and reliable data collection. It should include example photos of counting protocols, an opportunity to try the survey in the field and a test of the rater's abilities. The training should be held immediately before the teams go into the field so the information is fresh. You will be more effective if you explain:

- The data that will be collected and why this information is important
- How the data will be used
- Potential benefits that may result for the community
- How to interact with store employees or owners
- How to complete the data collection forms
- What to do if a problem arises
- Where to turn in the completed forms
- Timeline for completion

B. If possible, during the training, visit a "friendly" store to practice collecting data on the survey forms in a real-world situation. After visiting the store, meet with the data collectors and discuss any questions or problems they have with the survey form and counting protocols. This will help eliminate confusion and allow the surveys to be completed more efficiently.

C. To supplement your presentation, there are more photos on the DOH Tobacco Prevention & Control website at [www.doh.wa.gov/tobacco](http://www.doh.wa.gov/tobacco) or from Stanford at <http://prevention.stanford.edu/retailer/index.htm>.

## 2. Prepare Materials

A. Each team should have the following materials as they venture out into the field for data collection:

- **Names, addresses of stores to be visited:** List all stores, addresses, cross streets (if possible), phone numbers and a place to write comments. A list of stores by county is available from the local health department's tobacco program. If they are unclear on how to obtain this list, they can contact their contract manager at DOH.
- **Maps with store locations:** Along with the map with stores identified, include a regular map of the area. These are available at local supermarkets or through the American Automobile Association (AAA).
- **Survey forms:** Include a survey for each store in the sample. Have extra survey forms and pencils.

B. It is very helpful to provide a manual/material kit they can use while in the field that contains counting protocols, and other information from your training.

## 3. What Stores Do You Survey?

A. Identify the focus of your survey. Before embarking on efforts to reduce tobacco advertising and marketing in stores in your community, it is important to document the extent of the problem. This step will provide you with valuable information you can use for clarifying your objectives, planning and implementing strategies and evaluating your efforts.

B. Ad surveys can be community-wide or focus on a particular area. In a small community, it may be possible to survey all stores that sell tobacco. In a large community, you may want to select a random sample of a subset of stores. You may be only interested in stores near schools and parks, certain types of stores, specific neighborhoods, or political jurisdictions so you can present the results to specific policy makers or political leaders.

C. If you are going to focus on a particular subset of stores, be sure to work with your evaluator to identify an appropriate “control” group so you will be able to say how your community or stores of interest are different or the same. For instance, if you are interested in assessing how the tobacco industry targets minority neighborhoods through documenting the amount of advertising in local stores, you also will need to survey stores in another community with similar laws and populations, but with a different ethnic population.

D. It is helpful to use the Operation Storefront Survey Form to help you identify the types of stores to choose from. Currently we collect data from the following categories: convenience store, convenience/gas station, gas only (that sells tobacco), restaurant, bar/lounge, grocery store, pharmacy/drug store, department store, tobacco discount store. These are good categories to help you form your subsets.

E. Store lists may be compiled using the Yellow Pages of your phone directory or Internet business directory (such as Yahoo.com or Qwestdex.com). You can also obtain retailer lists by county from your local tobacco prevention program as discussed above.

#### **4. Going Into the Stores**

A. It is important for the data collector to be aware of the store environment and stay out of the way of customers or employees. The natural flow of customers into the store may interrupt data collection, increasing the time spent in the store.

B. A working relationship with the storeowners is helpful, especially if you plan to conduct on-going activities in the store, such as a voluntary reduction or removal of tobacco advertising. Start by appealing to the storeowner’s “community” perspective (e.g., store owners may be parents of school children and concerned about their own children’s exposure to tobacco advertising). This will require further training for the data collectors, if they are to be involved in a merchant education component of an intervention.